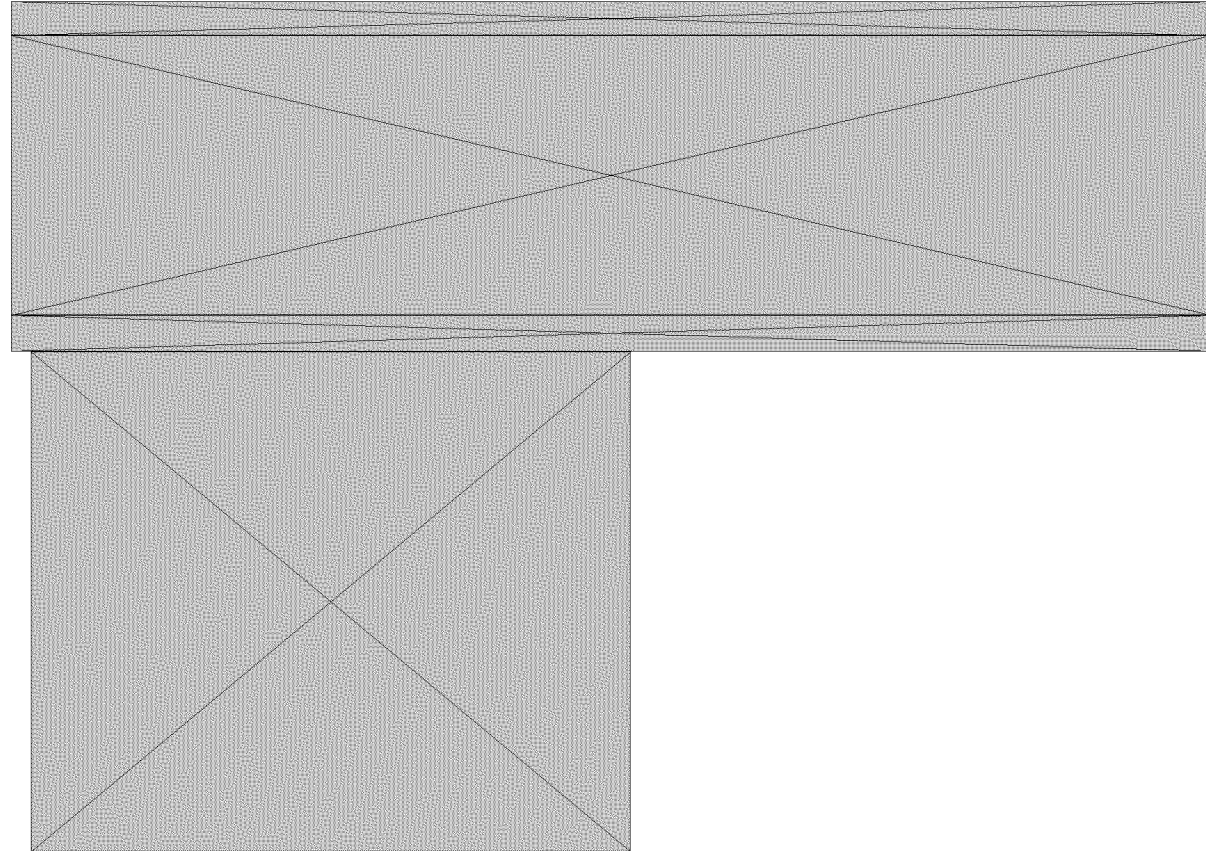


To: Zito, Kelly[ZITO.KELLY@EPA.GOV]
From: EnergyGuardian
Sent: Mon 8/10/2015 11:01:35 PM
Subject: DOE: Wind capacity rising, costs sinking

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Energy and environment headlines for the afternoon of Monday, August 10, 2015



DOE: Wind capacity rising, costs sinking

By Kevin Rogers

U.S. wind power generation grew 8 percent to 66 gigawatts in 2014, reversing the previous year's slump in a surge that drove the lowest-ever costs for wind energy nationwide, the U.S. Energy Department reported Monday. Critics, however, dismissed it as part of the Obama administration's "PR effort" to promote his climate plan.

According to the **2014 Wind Technologies Market Report**, wind accounted for 24 percent of new electric generating additions and rose to provide 4.9 percent of total end use demand.

Average price per kilowatt hour, meanwhile, fell to 2.35 cents under Power Purchase Agreements -- in which utilities and traders buy power from wind generators -- marking a 66 percent decline from 7 cents in 2009.

The average was brought down by cheap prices in the central region, the report said. The department said that wind projects with PPAs signed in 2014 fell below national wholesale power prices. According to EIA data for 2014, average wholesale electricity prices nationwide were 5.2 cents per kWh.

The department also unveiled a report detailing growth in distributed wind installations, which reached nearly 1 GW of capacity last year.

"With declining costs and continued technological development, these reports demonstrate that wind power is a reliable source of clean, renewable energy for American homes and businesses," Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz said in a statement.

"Through continued investments and the help of stable policies, we're confident that wind power will keep playing a major role in creating jobs and shaping America's clean energy future."

The market report also found that the wind energy job market saw 30 percent growth in 2014 from the previous year, adding 22,500 jobs for a grand total of 73,000.

The American Wind Energy Association on Monday cheered the report as proof that wind could provide affordable supplies of renewable electricity but contended that Congress needed to develop stable growth policies, which would involve a permanent extension of the wind production and investment tax credits.

"Wind energy is increasingly cost-competitive in several parts of the U.S., but we need stable, predictable policy to continue bringing this consumer benefit to every corner of the country," AWEA CEO Tom Kiernan said in a statement. "Policy stability will keep this American economic success story going."

The Senate Finance Committee last month advanced legislation that would renew the Production Tax Credit at \$23 per megawatt hour. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, a member of that committee and supporter of the credit, said he's "not surprised" by wind's growth.

"Domestic wind energy is increasingly attractive to consumers. It meets energy needs without creating pollution and without adding dependence on products from countries where dictators wish to do us harm," he said in a statement. "It's such an appealing energy source that it has drawn Facebook and Google to open facilities in Iowa. These companies recognize that wind power is a good deal for business and for the environment."

But critics on Monday said the report masked the costs of wind energy. Jim Jeffries, an aide to Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., said that despite the growth in wind energy, it couldn't match the potential of other power sources, including nuclear.

"After 22 years of billions of dollars in subsidies, wind still produces only 5 percent of our electricity and windmills only produce power 35 percent of the time," Jeffries said in a statement. "Our country needs more nuclear reactors to provide cheap, reliable power to create more jobs -- not more windmills."

Alexander has decried the Obama administration's "national windmill policy."

Chris Warren, a spokesman for the free-market American Energy Alliance, said the report marched in lockstep with the administration's climate goals.

"This is really just part of the administration's larger PR efforts to promote their climate agenda. These are what these reports are really about," he said. "They're not really giving an honest look at what the cost of wind really is. If the wind industry is as vibrant as it's claiming to be, then there's no need for the wind Production Tax Credit."

The report comes a week after the administration unveiled its final Clean Power Plan to slash carbon emissions from power plants by 32 percent from 2005 levels. In the final version of the rule, the Environmental Protection Agency would allow renewable energy installed in 2020 and 2021 to count toward the 2022 to 2030 compliance period.

Warren suggested that Republicans opposed to the Clean Power Plan might want to turn their focus toward eliminating the wind tax credit.

"If the administration wants to lean more on renewables, as we saw in the release of the final rule, they need the PTC to hide the costs of wind energy," he said. "I think that should embolden conservatives and Republicans on the Hill to try to get rid of the PTC, because if you support the PTC, then you're buying into the president's larger climate agenda and the carbon regulations."

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Residents demand health answers as mine spill fouds rivers

By Susan Montoya Bryan and Ellen Knickmeyer

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP) — Farmers, towns and tribes slammed water-intake gates shut as a sludge-laden plume from a Colorado mine spill rolled down principal rivers in the desert Southwest on Monday, prompting local officials and families to demand answers about possible long-term threats from heavy metals borne along by the spill.

Colorado and New Mexico declared stretches of the Animas and San Juan rivers to be disaster areas as the orange-colored waste stream estimated to be 100 miles long churned downstream toward Lake Powell in Utah after the spill Wednesday at the abandoned Gold King mine.

The Navajo Nation, which covers parts of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona, also declared an emergency as it shut down water intake systems and stopped diverting water from the San Juan River.

The 3 million gallons of mine waste included high concentrations of arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. Workers with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency accidentally unleashed the spill as federal and contract workers inspected the abandoned mine site near Silverton, Colorado.

13 states want judge to block new federal water rule

By James MacPherson

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Thirteen states led by North Dakota are asking a federal judge in Bismarck to block a new rule that gives federal authorities jurisdiction over some state waters.

North Dakota Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem said he will file a preliminary injunction Monday, the deadline for such legal action to prevent the rule from taking effect on Aug. 28.

Stenehjem said he was hopeful a judge will grant a hearing on the injunction within the next few days.

North Dakota is leading a lawsuit filed on June 29 challenging the Obama administration rule that gives federal agencies authority to protect some streams, tributaries and wetlands under the Clean Water Act. Stenehjem said the "Waters of the U.S." rule by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Army Corps of Engineers is "unnecessary" and "unlawful." He said it does nothing to increase water quality in North Dakota and other states.

Michigan senator seeks study on Canadian nuclear waste plan

By The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., wants to invoke a treaty with Canada to prevent construction of a nuclear waste disposal facility than a mile from Lake Huron.

The Michigan Democrat said Monday she's seeking a study by the International Joint Commission of risks the project might pose to the Great Lakes. The commission was established under a 1909 treaty between the U.S. and Canada to resolve disputes over shared waterways.

Her bill would order the U.S. State Department to ask Canada to delay a decision on the waste facility until the study is finished.

Ontario Power Generation wants to bury waste from nuclear power plants in rock chambers near Kincardine, Ontario.

Obama says GOP opposing Iran deal over politics, not merits

By Josh Lederman

CHILMARK, Mass. (AP) — Brushing off criticism from a majority in Congress, President Barack Obama said Republicans are reflexively opposing the nuclear deal with Iran because his name is attached to it, as he continued his campaign to build support for the controversial deal.

Ahead of a looming congressional vote to try to derail the deal, Obama argued in a pair of interviews released Monday that it should surprise nobody that Republicans were opposed to the deal en masse. He pointed to their resistance to his health care law and budget proposals as evidence that their recent hostility had nothing to do with the content of the nuclear deal.

"Unfortunately, a large portion of the Republican Party, if not a near unanimous portion of Republican representatives, are going to be opposed to anything that I do," Obama told NPR News, adding that the judgments have often been based not on the merits, but "on their politics."

That hasn't always been the case. It was Republicans who in June drove legislation through Congress giving Obama expanded authority to negotiate trade deals with Europe and Asia — over the staunch opposition of much of Obama's own Democratic Party. Many Republicans have also demonstrated a willingness to work with Obama on criminal justice reform and increasing funding to the military in excess of the budget caps put in place previously by both parties.

Methane-powered tractor could cut farmers' costs, emissions

By Coleen Barry

VENARIA REALE, Italy (AP) — Luca Remmert's dream of running a self-sustainable farm is within sight. He produces energy from corn and grain near the northern Italian city of Turin and hopes in the not too distant future to run all of his eight tractors on methane generated at the farm.

Remmert's 450-hectare (1,100-acre) La Bellotta farm has been testing a second-generation prototype of what will be the first tractor to run on methane, the T6 by New Holland Agriculture.

Methane would be 30 percent cheaper than diesel. And for farms that produce their own bio-methane, the costs of fuel would drop to nothing. Bio-methane is a type of gas that is produced by the processing of organic waste — something farms have a lot of.

The technology will likely be attractive to farmers in many developed economies, particularly those that are turning to the production of biofuel due to a squeeze on profits on food products.

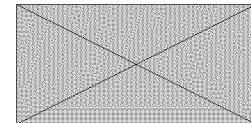
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A message from the American Petroleum Institute

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Week in Review - Clean Power Plan rolls out amid charges of collusion

Meanwhile, power plant emissions hit 27-year low.

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Shell asks OK for deeper drilling in Chukchi Sea

Currently restricted to drilling down 3,000 feet in its Burger Prospect, Shell has already asked the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement for permission to go deeper, FuelFix reports.

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Publicly optimistic, Transcanada privately planning for Keystone rejection

Sources have told The Canadian Press that Transcanada, the company seeking to build the Keystone XL pipeline, is anticipating that the Obama administration will reject the project, and is planning what it will do in response.

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Clinton has left 2008 pro-coal stance in the past

Hillary Clinton gained an early edge against Barack Obama in the 2008 primaries by taking a pro-coal stance, but she isn't using that strategy in her current run for the White House, Reuters reports.

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California consumer advocate wants San Onofre case reopened

The head of California's Office of Ratepayer Advocates said he's filing papers "as quickly as possible" to pull out of the settlement with Southern California Edison over the now-closed San Onofre nuclear plant, the Los Angeles Times reports.

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Oil soars on higher gasoline, lower dollar; Brent back over \$50

A problem at the BP refinery in Whiting, Indiana that pushed up gasoline prices had a knock-on effect on crude Monday, along with a drop in the dollar. U.S. benchmark crude gained \$1.09 to settle at \$44.96 a barrel on the Nymex, while in London Brent jumped 3.7 percent, or \$1.80, to \$50.41, Reuters reports.

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Consortium to get Oncor in Energy Future bankruptcy exit plan

A \$12.2 billion plan Energy Future Holdings Corp. filed in court in Delaware to exit Chapter 11 bankruptcy involves a consortium taking over its 80 percent stake in Oncor, with Hunt Consolidated to run the Texas transmission business, The Wall Street Journal reports.

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Miller to battle attempt to push subsidiary to bankruptcy

Executives at Miller Energy Resources have told The Wall Street Journal they plan to fight moves by creditors to force the company's Cook Inlet Energy subsidiary into bankruptcy.

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ERCOT so far weathering heat wave demand

Triple-digit temperatures and record electricity demand have failed to cause problems for the Electric Reliability Council of Texas in recent days, although observers warn the system reliability could be affected by factors in the longer term, including the retirement of aging power plants and the Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan, E&E reports.

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LA program to offer electric vehicle sharing

A \$1.6 million grant from the California Air Resources Board will help Los Angeles set up a vehicle sharing program for low income neighborhoods, where 80 out of 100 will run on plug in power, National Journal reports.

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Agreement reached with BLM over Burning Man festival

The Bureau of Land Management has issued a permit for this year's Burning Man festival to take place in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, after the BLM withdrew its request for a special VIP compound for its staff, and other disagreements with organizers were ironed out, E&E reports.

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Upcoming Events

- Aug. 10, Billings, Montana: The Western Organization of Resource Councils, Northern Plains Resource Council and Powder River Basin Resource Council to hold a briefing on reforms to the federal coal leasing program ahead of Bureau of Land Management listening sessions in Montana and Wyoming. DIAL IN: 1-877-615-4339. Passcode: 7545791#. 11:15 am , 220 S. 27th Street, Billings, Montana.
- Aug. 10, Washington: The Sierra Club to hold a teleconference on the technical, legal and policy implications of the newly-final Clean Power Plan. Dial In: 877-876-9177. Passcode: CLEAN. 11:00 am

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